

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 153756

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 153756

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CPAS, LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN PASSPORT PROBLEM: EFFECTS ON AMCITS

REFERENCE: TRIPOLI 987

SUMMARY: DURING CALL ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM, ESSO LIBYA PRESIDENT COX URGED USG TO FOLLOW EXAMPLE OTHER POWERS IN LAR AND INSERT ARABIC STAMP IN PASSPORTS AS MEASURE TO EASE OIL COMPANIES' PERSONNEL BIND. WHILE EX-PRESSING USG UNDERSTANDING OF COMPANIES' PLIGHT, NEWSOM NOTED PARTICULAR PROBLEMS USG FACES IN LAR AND EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT CAPITULATION WOULD RESOLVE THEM. NEWSOM WEL-COMED RECEIVING SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF PROBLEM VISA ISSUE POSED FOR COMPANY AND PROMISED DEPARTMENT WOULD WEIGH THEM CAREFULLY IN ITS APPROACH TO THIS ASPECT US-LIBYAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ESSO LIBYA PRESIDENT GERALD COX ACCOMPANIED BY EXXON EXECUTIVES FRANK PRANUCK AND ELLIOTT CATRULLA CALLED ON ASSIST. SEC. NEWSOM AUGUST 2. SCA ADMINISTRATOR WATSON
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 153756

AND AF/N DIRECTOR BLAKE AMONG OTHERS, ALSO TOOK PART.

2. DURING LENGTHY MEETING, COX SHARED GENERALLY GLOOMY IMPRESSION OF PROSPECTS FOR AMERICAN COMMERCIAL PRESENCE IN LAR WHILE UNDERSCORING BENEFITS OF KEEPING OIL COMPANIES' OPERATIONS GOING AS SMOOTHLY AND AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. HIS MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO PLEAD THAT USG FOLLOW EXAMPLE OTHER COUNTRIES, "ACCEPT PRINCIPLE" OF INSERTION OF ARABIC IN PASSPORTS, AND USE ARABIC STAMP AND US SEAL IF NECESSARY. COX MAINTAINED ESSO NOW "HURTING" IN TERMS RECRUITING AND HOLDING KEY PERSONNEL. HE SAID REMAINING 175 AMCIT PRINCIPALS EMPLOYED BY ESSO LIBYA AND THEIR DEPENDENTS ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO LAR HARASSMENT ON PASSPORTS ISSUE. CRUDE PUMPING COULD CONTINUE USING LIBYANS AND THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS, BUT AMCITS ARE ESSENTIAL TO BREGA LNG OPERATION. COX AFFIRMED BELIEF USG DESTINED TO CAVE ON PASSPORT ISSUE SOONER OR LATER AND ARGUED THAT THE SOONER THE DEPT. DOES SO, THE BETTER ARE ESSO'S CHANCES OF KEEPING AND/OR RECRUITING HIGH CALIBRE PERSONNEL. PASSPORT PROBLEM, WHICH IS ONLY LATEST BUT MOST ONEROUS OF SERIES OF LIBYAN MEASURES AFFECTING EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY, HAS LED TO SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM FOR PERSONNEL.

3. ASKED FOR SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF HARDSHIPS ESSO HAS EXPERIENCED, COX CITED CASES OF TWO OLDER BRODERICK SONS DENI ENTRY AND OF COATES FAMILY WHICH CHOSE TO LEAVE CHILDREN ABROAD. AS WELL, HE SAID, SEVEN OUT OF EIGHT EXPERTS NEEDED FOR SPECIAL TANK CLEANING PROJECT AT BREGA RECENTLY REFUSED ASSIGNMENTS TO LAR. COX VOLUNTEERED THAT COLLEAGUES ESPEY OF OCCIDENTAL AND SPIRES OF OASIS CONSIDERING HOUSING EMPLOYEES' DEPENDENTS OUTSIDE LIBYA AND BRINGING IN EMPLOYEES AS "BACHELORS"; THIS COURSE ESSO CONSIDERS WRONG, HE SAID. HE ASSERTED BELIEF THAT PROBLEMS FOR AMCITS WOULD EASE ONCE USG INFORMS LARG IT HAS CONCEDED LIBYAN POINT. HE OPINED THAT MERE RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT OF LIBYAN "VICTORY" ON THIS ISSUE COULD RESULT IN ORDER TO LARG IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES TO FACILITATE IMMEDIATELY AMCIT ENTRANCE INTO LIBYA.

4. NEWSOM THANKED COX FOR ELOQUENT PRESENTATION OF HIS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 153756

VIEWS AND ESPECIALLY FOR DETAILS ABOUT HARDSHIP CASES. HE NOTED COX'S SPECIFIC DETAILS WERE FIRST OFFERED DIRECTLY TO DEPARTMENT BY US FIRM THOUGH DEPARTMENT AWARE OF COMPANIES' CONCERNS THROUGH EXCELLENT EMBASSY-COMPANIES CONSULTATIONS. NEWSOM SAID HE WOULD CONVEY COX'S VIEWS TO ALL CONCERNED. ASSIST. SEC. THEN DESCRIBED ARBITRARY NATURE OF LARG PASSPORT REGULATIONS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AND RECALLED LARG MFA NOTE TO EFFECT STAMP IN ARABIC

IS ONLY TEMPORARILY ACCEPTABLE PENDING ISSUANCE OF PASS-
PORTS PRINTED IN ARABIC. AMCITS, NEWSOM SAID, ARE HURT
MORE THAN OTHERS, IN PART BECAUSE QADHAFI UNDOUBTEDLY RE-
GARDS US AS SPECIAL TARGET, BUT USG HAS NO ASSURANCES THAT
CAPITULATION NOW WOULD HEAD OFF OTHER LARG DEMANDS, IN-
CLUDING DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE PRINTING OF ARABIC IN PASS-
PORTS WHICH USG CANNOT CONSIDER. QADHAFI REGIME'S ANTI-
AMERICANISM IS PROFOUND, HE SAID, AND AMCITS ARE A HANDY
TARGET. USG'S PRESENT STAND TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION
BROAD RANGE OF US INTERESTS, NOT JUST OUR COMMERCIAL
INTERESTS, ADMITTEDLY SUBSTANTIAL. FINALLY, NEWSOM DE-
SCRIBED FRUITLESS US EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE COMPROMISE ON
PASSPORTS ISSUE, INABILITY TO DEVELOP DIALOGUE WITH RCC
DECISION MAKERS, AND POINTED OUT THAT OFFICIAL AMERICANS
IN LAR ARE HARDEST HIT BY LARG POLICY.

5. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT HAS LEARNED THAT
ARAB-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY CIRCULAT-
ING INQUIRY AMONG MEMBERSHIP IN EFFORT DETERMINE EFFECT
OF CURRENT USG PASSPORT POLICY ON MEMBERS' INTERESTS IN
LAR.

6. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT VALUES EMBASSY'S EXCELLENT
ANALYSIS (TRIPOLI 987) WHICH WE CANNOT FAULT. YOU MAY
BE ASSURED WE WILL CONSULT WITH YOU AS DEPARTMENT'S THINK-
ING ON THIS PROBLEM EVOLVES. ROGERS

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